United Nations E/2017/SR.24

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 June 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Integration segment

Summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 May 2017, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Munir (Vice-President) ..... (Pakistan)

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General discussion

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Mr. Munir (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 5: Integration segment *(continued)*

Panel discussion: "Policy integration across borders"

1. **Mr. Revkin** (Senior Reporter for Climate and Related Issues, ProPublica; former Reporter, New York Times; and former Senior Fellow for Environmental Understanding, Pace University), moderator, said that all areas of sustainability could contribute to poverty reduction and that sustainability was always improved by enhanced communication between disciplines and actors at the global, regional and municipal levels.

2. **Mr. Somavía** (Director, Diplomatic Academy of Chile; former Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Interregional Policy Cooperation; former President of the Economic and Social Council; and former Director-General of the International Labour Organization), panellist, said that while efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals had taken the traditional sectoral approach, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system both called for an integrated approach to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, Governments, the United Nations system and other stakeholders did not yet have the capacity to achieve the level of policy integration necessary for sustainable development, in particular in the area of development cooperation. Crucially, the United Nations development system was not currently in a position to help Member States seeking assistance with policy integration. It must therefore develop its capacities in that area in order to provide that assistance and give credibility to the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, although a number of useful concepts, such as multidimensional poverty and gender mainstreaming, had been defined, the concept of policy integration itself still lacked conceptual clarity.

3. United Nations development efforts had gone through a number of phases over the years. The emphasis had for a long time been on coordination. However, while actors had paid lip service to coordination, they had generally been resistant to external coordination. The focus had then shifted to coherence. While coherence was important, it must be grounded in the principle that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development were equal and interdependent. Otherwise, a focus on coherence could allow unbalanced situations to arise in which economic policies set the boundaries for work that could be done on environmental and social issues. The emphasis had then shifted to cooperation. United Nations entities were cooperating, but their efforts fell short of policy integration because cooperation was limited to bilateral cooperation on particular issues. The shortcomings of that approach had led to the current move towards policy convergence, which was centred on common objectives. That was closer to policy integration, as it recognized that an objective could be achieved through a combination of policies in different areas. However, the weakness with that approach was that it was one-way: a phenomenon was recognized as multidimensional, but it was not taken into account that those individual dimensions were also multidimensional. Policy integration had to begin with a common understanding that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development were of equal status and involve the establishment of a network of interconnected goals and targets that would succeed or fail together. Policy integration would be easiest for less developed countries, which were in a position to establish the proper balance early in the development process.

4. There were four main challenges that would have to be overcome to implement policy integration. First, a common understanding of the concept must be reached. Policy integration involved maximizing the potential of interactions between the economic, social and environmental dimensions to achieve a particular objective. The difficulty lay in that actors were specialists whose education had trained them to focus on their particular area of expertise. The United Nations would have to take on the role of thought leader to change that way of thinking. Steps had already been taken in that direction; for example, the 2016 United Nations Development Programme Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean focused on multidimensional progress, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had issued a policy brief on concepts, tools and experiences in policy integration for sustainable development, and much good work had been done by the regional commissions. The second challenge was technical. It was not feasible to identify every linkage between social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Instead, efforts should be made to identify a manageable number of critical linkages that would significantly contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Education was likely to be relevant for all of the goals, for example. The third challenge was institutional. It

had been recognized that Government departments, United Nations entities, businesses and civil society organizations acted only within their limited areas of expertise. To overcome that difficulty, decision-making had often been elevated to the level of the office of the Head of State of Government. However, decision-making should not be too far removed from those responsible for implementing the decisions; they were best placed to understand the intellectual, analytical and technical issues. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution contained useful recommendations in that regard. The fourth challenge was to find a way to measure progress towards policy integration, which could not be done using traditional indicators.

5. It should be borne in mind that Government policies were short-term and State policies would last into the medium term, but the ultimate goal was for sustainable development to become the norm. Therefore, when developing policies on a particular issue, it was important to consider whether a long-term view needed to be taken in order to change the general mindset of society on the matter.

6. There were several steps that the Council could take to promote policy integration. First, it could request the creation of a task force comprising experts from within and outside the United Nations to identify relevant experiences and formulate recommendations on how to address the above-mentioned challenges, for consideration at the 2018 integration segment. Second, the Council, with the support of the regional commissions, could ask countries to provide an analysis of the practical ways in which they were already working towards policy integration and what support they might need, for discussions in the regional forums on sustainable development. The regional commissions could then create a joint outcome document. Third, countries engaged in development cooperation could evaluate how those policies could be reoriented to support the policy integration efforts of States and the United Nations system. Fourth, the various United Nations statistics bodies developing sustainable development indicators could all be involved in the development of indicators or other assessment criteria for measuring progress on policy integration. The documents resulting from those four initiatives would represent substantial progress in terms of analysis and would be very useful at the Council's policy integration segment in 2018.

7. While the challenge of achieving policy integration might seem daunting, the biggest challenge, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, had already been overcome. That momentous advance should not be allowed to be undermined by a failure to address much smaller, but very important, hurdles.

8. **Mr. Revkin** (Senior Reporter for Climate and Related Issues, ProPublica; former Reporter, New York Times; and former Senior Fellow for Environmental Understanding, Pace University) said that it would be important to reach out to external institutions that were experiencing similar challenges to those faced by the United Nations, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. There were also interesting experiments underway to bring together countries from different regions that faced similar issues, such as the meeting for tropical countries that would be hosted by the Earth Observatory of Singapore later in 2017.

9. **Ms. Fernando** (Senior Research Professional, Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka), panellist, said that attempts to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development had been made before, but primarily in the context of specific, short-term projects. Currently there was a high-level mandate for it, and the irrefutable evidence of climate change was providing additional momentum. However, there was a danger that the obligation to implement integration within a limited time frame and with limited resources could result in States choosing the easiest or most superficially logical areas to integrate rather than developing a properly thought-out strategy.

10. Her presentation would focus on content coherence, although process coherence and monitoring and review coherence were also important. Content coherence must be implemented within policies, meaning that each individual policy should cover all three dimensions of sustainable development. There must also be coherence across sectors, which would involve determining the potential positive and negative impact of actions in one sector on other sectors. There must also be coherence between national and international policies.

11. There were a number of essential elements that must be considered to ensure sustainability. Current efforts to create sustainable systems were not taking due account of the finite nature of natural resources. There should also be a greater focus on ecosystem stability, which was a prerequisite for economic growth and poverty eradication. Inequality was another significant issue, but fortunately there was general recognition that sustainable development could not be achieved without addressing that problem. It was also important to bear in mind that sustainable development must be non-linear. If initial efforts were overly focused on economic growth, environmental and social

problems would be created that would be difficult to address at a later stage.

12. Sri Lanka had some useful experience to share in the area of policy integration. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife had mapped the national Ministries and their subordinate departments against the Sustainable Development Goals to identify gaps and determine where entities were already well placed to implement elements of the Goals. In addition, her organization had co-led an exercise that used a simple network analysis tool downloaded from the Internet to explore the relationship between Sri Lankan energy policies and the Sustainable Development Goals, on the basis of government policy documents. One finding was that the country's energy policies were not well linked to the transport, agricultural and industrial sectors. With regard to methodology, network analysis was an effective way to identify linkages and could be done through simple, readily available tools. Policy documents were useful for analysis because they were easily accessible and the Government could be held accountable for them; however, policy documents from different departments had varied greatly in terms of detail and the time frame taken into consideration. The accuracy of network analysis exercises could be improved by including persons involved in the design and implementation of policies in the process.

13. One challenge to the implementation of policy integration was achieving the necessary political will. While most Governments had committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, it was difficult for some to imagine that sustainable development policies could take precedence over economic policies. It would be important to provide incentives, as attempts to impose sustainable development through regulatory measures had not been successful. Sustainable development must also be linked to budgets and finances. The concept of sustainable development had existed for some time, but it had generally fallen within the purview of environment ministries, which tended not to have a great deal of influence on budget and overall planning processes. It would also be necessary to make changes to the school and university systems to ensure that, in the long term, economists were more familiar with environmental issues.

14. It might be useful to approach policy integration by focusing on a number of very influential sectors, in particular the energy sector. Energy was clearly linked to all three dimensions of sustainable development: it was the cause of climate change, the driver of the economic system and an essential tool for improving living standards. The United Nations development system must also become more integrated and move away from providing aid packages that were earmarked for use in a specific sector.

15. It would be a challenge to ensure that all sectors supported the ultimate goal of sustainability. However, the extremely broad scope of the Sustainable Development Goals meant that objectives in any policy area were relevant to them and could be dealt with in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, which opened the door to many opportunities.

16. **Mr. Marroquín** (Specialist in cross-border management, Tri-National Commission of the Trifinio Plan), panellist, said that the Trifinio Fraternidad transboundary biosphere reserve spanned strategically significant parts of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Poverty in the tri-border area put a strain on natural resources as populations competed over water, food and forest resources. As a result, local populations had few economically viable opportunities to end the cycle of environmental degradation and poverty in the region. The integration taking place under the Trifinio Plan was recognized globally as one of the most successful examples of cross-border cooperation on water. Cross-border issues were rarely taken into account in national political agendas, but cross-border poverty was a real problem and regional mechanisms to promote sustainable development in border areas would find cross-border cooperation a useful tool.

17. When attempting to address such issues, it was important to align local and regional policies with international policies and to enhance the participation of regional actors in the development of international policies. Cross-border issues should be considered a determining factor in sustainable development, and regional mechanisms to promote cross-border development should be promoted. Cross-border cooperation in the tri-border area had been strengthened by a high degree of participation from local actors, including local governments and civil society. High-level participation was also important, which was why the Tri-national Commission of the Trifinio Plan was headed by the Vice-Presidents of the participating countries. A legal framework for development cooperation had been established through the adoption of a treaty between the three States, which meant that national institutions could be held accountable for promoting development in the region and made it possible to communicate the requests of local actors to national institutions. Cross-border policies had been implemented in the region for three decades. Successful implementation had required the support of the national authorities and the political will of all parties to engage in constructive dialogue and

such agreements. Institutions with specific authority for the region had helped processes run smoothly and facilitated agreements between sectors. It had also been important to maintain ongoing dialogue spanning the local, national and international levels.

18. Cross-border regions were highly susceptible to outbreaks of conflict over natural resources such as water, but the capacity of the Tri-national Commission to involve national institutions in cross-border issues had prevented such crises on a number of occasions. Policy integration had also created economic opportunities for local communities, in particular through a public-private partnership involving international and local actors to develop a profitable and sustainable coffee industry in the tri-border area. In cooperation with national institutions, issue-specific committees had been created to facilitate regional-level discussions on policies and sustainable development in areas such as water, tourism and protected lands.

19. One of the lessons that had been learned through the process was that a formal agreement between Governments, such as the treaty adopted by El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in 1997, was key to facilitating action. The official designation of an area as a strategic region gave it added value. Another lesson learned was that local actors must be involved and well organized. The establishment of regional structures to address specific issues was very important. Scientific research was necessary to establish a solid basis for plans, strategies and policies. In the case of the Trifinio Fraternidad transboundary biosphere, universities from the three countries had carried out joint studies that led to the adoption by the local authorities of a number of policies to protect transboundary resources such as aquifers. It should be borne in mind that the impact of cross-border issues went beyond the immediate area. For example, 40 per cent of the water produced in the Trinifio Fraternidad biosphere region was consumed in San Salvador, so a water crisis in the region would cripple the capital city.

20. Challenges in implementing such an approach included maintaining a dialogue at the highest levels while also ensuring local ownership and the participation of local stakeholders in policy development. It should also be borne in mind that addressing the effects of climate change required innovative tools and mechanisms to ensure food security in protected areas. Bolder and more strategic technical and financial mechanisms were needed to provide livelihood opportunities for local populations.

21. It was logical to consider cross-border issues in efforts to promote sustainable development, given that poverty had no borders. A cross-border perspective would help to address phenomena such as migration between neighbouring countries driven by a lack of employment opportunities on one side of the border. It was important to build local, national and regional capacities to implement policies, and to improve planning and monitoring systems.

22. **Mr. Palma Cerna** (Honduras) said that the 2016 United Nations Development Programme Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean provided valuable insights into multidimensional development and alternative means of measuring poverty. The regional commissions were well placed to analyse poverty and international cooperation at the regional level. Discussions on integration should take into account not only cooperation between States but also cooperation between the different bodies of their development partners, in particular the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

23. Trifinio Fraternidad transboundary biosphere reserve, the first transboundary biosphere reserve in Latin America, was an example of successful integrated, sustainable natural resource management and cooperation between States. As a result of its success, it had been included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list of internationally recognized biosphere reserves in 2011 and received support from other States, including an investment of €11 million from the Government of Germany. The cooperation between the three countries could serve as a model to help entities of the United Nations development system break down silos.

24. **Mr. Medina Linares** (Guatemala) said that sustainable economic development was a priority for his Government. The Plan Trifinio enhanced the productive capacity of the local population without damaging its natural resources. It also promoted integration by facilitating flows of persons, goods, services and information across borders in the region and enhanced economic complementarity and social and cultural interaction among the three concerned States, enabling them to better work together in pursuit of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

25. **Mr. Soriano Mena** (Observer for El Salvador) said that the preservation of natural resources such as water, soil, flora and fauna in the Trifinio Fraternidad transboundary biosphere reserve area was only possible through the establishment of socioeconomic conditions that met the needs of the local populations. The community must also understand that it would reap the benefits of sustainable development only if the

ecosystem was used rationally. The policies and actions used to implement the 2030 Agenda should reflect the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. **Ms. Mucavi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that food, water, energy and climate change were interdependent and must therefore be considered together. It was essential to have national and international coordination mechanisms in place to ensure that an approach focusing on the nexus between those elements was taken into account in the management of national and transboundary resources. Furthermore, development actors should conduct a context-specific assessment of that nexus when planning new policies, strategies, investments and technical activities. That would involve identifying the interactions between the water, energy, food and climate systems in the particular context, evaluating the effectiveness of the planned actions on that basis and determining how to manage trade-offs and foster synergies between sectors.

27. The Global Framework for Action to Cope with Water Scarcity in Agriculture in the Context of Climate Change, launched by FAO and its partners in 2016, called for urgent action in the face of climate change and increasing competition for water resources. The sustainable pathway to food security in the context of water scarcity lay in maximizing benefits that cut across multiple dimensions of the food-water-climate nexus to enable sustainable agricultural production while reducing vulnerability to increasing water scarcity. The FAO regional water scarcity initiative in the Near East and North Africa was already helping a number of States to address the issue by enhancing water accounting, monitoring safe consumption boundaries and adopting technological, governance and policy measures to increase the efficiency of water use in agriculture.

General discussion

28. **The President** invited the Council to begin its general discussion on the theme of the integration segment, "Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?"

29. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Observer for Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the eradication of poverty was the greatest challenge facing the world but was essential for sustainable development, particularly in Africa, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and middle-income countries, countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. It was deeply regrettable that 13 per cent of the world's population still lived in extreme poverty and that the world was not on track to eradicate poverty by 2030. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis, which had been caused by developed countries, was reversing the modest gains that had been made by developing countries and pushing a growing number of their inhabitants into extreme poverty.

30. In order for economic growth to contribute to poverty reduction, it was essential to reduce inequality and promote the development of appropriate social protection measures by focusing macroeconomic and social policies on job creation and social inclusion. The Group called for the mobilization of adequate and predictable resources to enable developing countries to end poverty. With regard to official development assistance, developed countries should not only honour their existing commitments but also increase their contributions in order to play a meaningful role in eradicating poverty.

31. The Group welcomed the significant contribution of South-South cooperation to efforts to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development and encouraged developing countries to voluntarily step up their efforts to strengthen such cooperation. South-South cooperation was a collective endeavour based on the principle of solidarity. It was not a substitute for North-South cooperation, which should also be improved and amplified.

32. The Group stressed the need to enable Governments of developing countries to design their own development strategies and policy tools in line with their national priorities, characteristics and circumstances. The support of the United Nations systems and other international partners, backed by firm commitments to provide financial and technological resources, was crucial in order to bring about the necessary structural changes through people-centred economic and social policies designed to promote inclusive growth, job creation, investment in education, health care and infrastructure, the empowerment of women and the establishment of social safety nets. Through collective action and cooperation in good faith, it would be possible to create a world that was free of poverty, promoted equal opportunities for all and enjoyed social justice.

33. **Mr. Soriano Mena** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions should continue

to be the highest priority of the United Nations and an underlying objective of all its work.

34. Official development assistance and South-South and triangular cooperation, as a complement to North-South cooperation, were crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The specific challenges and realities of each State must also be taken into consideration. To that end, concessional and non-concessional international financing should be increased and used alongside national resources to build capacities at the country level. There was also a need to develop transparent means of measuring progress on sustainable development, taking into account poverty in all its forms and dimensions and structural gaps at all levels. Decisions by donor countries and international agencies concerning official development assistance should be based on transparent methodologies that took into account the multidimensional nature of development. CELAC countries had made much progress but still required official development assistance to reduce inequality and structural gaps and build capacities for sustainable development. They therefore reiterated their call for developed countries to fulfil their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance. They also called on the United Nations development system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders to take due account of the diverse and particular development needs of CELAC countries in their strategies and policies, in order to promote a broad and coherent approach to sustainable development.

35. In accordance with the CELAC Special Declaration on financing for development, those countries called for work to continue towards creating an environment that would foster sustainable development and enable the challenges relating to financing for development to be overcome. They also reaffirmed the commitments undertaken in the various international instruments on financing for development. The approach to sustainable development should be integrated and holistic and focus equally on the three dimensions of sustainable development.

36. Faced with the continuing challenges of poverty, food insecurity and hunger, CELAC countries reiterated their commitment to eliminate hunger in the region, including by strengthening the CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025. They also recognized the need for gender equality and equity to remain key elements of discussions of development and the importance of breaking down the structural gender inequality that perpetuated the cycle of poverty, marginalization and inequality. To be effective, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other relevant international agreements must be people-centred and human-rights based, include a gender perspective and promote the global structural changes that were needed to eradicate poverty.

37. **Mr. Begeç** (Observer for Turkey), speaking also on behalf of Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, and South Korea, said that progress towards poverty eradication had not proceeded at the desired pace in many parts of the world, with one in ten persons still living on under $1.90 per day. Economic shocks, food insecurity and climate change were reversing hard-won gains and could force many people back into poverty. The best way to address poverty and inequality was to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and strategies, with a view to transforming economies in such a way as to promote inclusive growth and the creation of decent jobs. While national ownership of that process was essential, poverty eradication was also a shared responsibility that would require international assistance, including the provision of the promised official development assistance. It was also important to mobilize additional concessional and non-concessional financing from public and private domestic and international sources and enhance South-South and triangular cooperation.

38. The implementation of rigorous and well-defined means of measuring multidimensional poverty would contribute to the development of more effective national and international policies. Reliable disaggregated data relating to the various areas covered by the Sustainable Development Goals would be needed to ensure that specific action was taken to benefit women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, older persons, migrants and rural populations. It was also important to support efforts in less developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries emerging from conflict, and to recognize the structural gaps that were putting constraints on development in middle-income countries.

39. The accumulated expertise of the United Nations development system meant that it was well positioned to contribute to sustainable development. To do so, it should provide integrated strategic analysis and policy advice and facilitate resource mobilization. Entities of the system should contribute their unique expertise to collaborative efforts aimed at achieving shared objectives.

40. **Ms. McGuire** (Observer for Grenada), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the integrated approach to poverty eradiation

called for in the 2030 Agenda was very important to Caribbean States, as the economic and social challenges they faced were exacerbated by environmental challenges. Coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion into agricultural land and aquifers, the increased frequency and intensity of drought, flooding, hurricanes and tropical storms were undermining efforts to eradicate poverty. There was also a risk that the submarine volcano Kick 'em Jenny could erupt, with disastrous consequences for the entire subregion.

41. CARICOM countries had undertaken a number of measures to mitigate the effects of climate change and achieve sustainable development and would continue to work to integrate climate change and disaster resilience strategies, policies and plans from various sectors, with an emphasis on gender equality. To ensure long-term sustainable development, efforts to exploit natural resources would be accompanied by awareness-raising and educational activities, and institutional capacity-building would take place to promote the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems and natural resources.

42. CARICOM member States were actively seeking to improve data collection, analysis and use in order to establish more transparent and equitable governance and develop evidence-based policies. They were also working to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national plans and strategies. Variables such as access to social protection, household headship characteristics and assets were taken into account when measuring poverty in order to take into account all its dimensions. Those efforts would enhance the quality of and increase access to social protection services and systems and enhance the economic participation and social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. CARICOM countries were particularly grateful to the Government of Chile for its support for those efforts and its commitment to South-South cooperation.

43. As part of its multidimensional approach to poverty reduction, CARICOM was developing a harmonized regional legislative framework for citizen security to tackle the problem of drug trafficking through the region and the resulting violence and crime, which particularly affected young men. In that connection, it was also working to build the capacity of young people, in particular for those from marginalized or vulnerable communities, to advocate for policy change.

44. **Mr. Locsin** (Observer for the Philippines) said that his country's economy was one of the strongest in Asia but, owing to the nature of postmodern economics, most of the wealth that had been generated was in the hands of a small proportion of the population, while the poor were unable to improve their situations. His Government had developed plans to address that imbalance through the establishment of a high-trust society that was resilient to change and cooperative in the face of challenges. His Government also aimed to develop a globally competitive knowledge economy that would promote equitably shared progress and prosperity. It had set a goal of reducing the poverty rate from 21 per cent to 14 per cent by 2022, which would involve lifting 6 million people out of poverty by increasing jobs and salaries in urban and rural areas, encouraging innovation and increasing the support of the people for their democratically elected Government. Combating crime and drugs was a high priority for his Government, which would not legalize criminal activity or tolerate immoral and life-destroying activities. The poverty reduction strategy would also include measures to improve education, build infrastructure to promote development in urban and rural areas, and help people become more adaptable in terms of finding new ways to generate income and adapting existing processes to make the most of technology. There would also be an emphasis on inclusive financing, in order to promote entrepreneurship. The overarching aim was to enable every individual to achieve a sense of personal fulfilment from their life and work. Development efforts would have either a positive or a negative impact on current and future generations across the globe, depending on whether development was sustainable or unsustainable. That was why sustainable, people-centred development was so important.

45. **Mr. Mahmadaminov** (Observer for Tajikistan) said that millions of people around the world were still suffering from poverty and hunger. Two years had already passed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and the challenges would only become more complicated unless they were addressed urgently through coordinated and concerted action to eradicate poverty. It was particularly important to work to ensure that countries in special situations, such as less developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, were able to achieve that goal.

46. Poverty eradication was a priority for his Government, which had adopted a number of successive poverty eradication strategies and a strategy to improve well-being. Efforts had focused on areas such as ensuring macroeconomic stability, developing the private sector with a view to attracting greater investment, diversifying the economy and strengthening the social partnership strategy. Drawing on lessons

learned from previous experience, recent strategies had included measures to strengthen coordination between the national and municipal governments, and indicators had been made more measurable and realistic. As a result of his Government's efforts, the poverty level had fallen from 72 per cent in 2003 to 31 per cent in 2015 and the average salary was currently 60 times greater than it had been two decades earlier.

47. It must be borne in mind that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would be difficult for countries in special situations. His country was still unable to meet the national demand for electricity in winter, which complicated efforts to eradicate poverty. However, his Government was committed to achieving its goals of doubling the gross domestic product, halving poverty and substantially expanding the middle class by 2020, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

48. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa) said that poverty eradication was a cross-cutting element of the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda had a similar focus to his Government's national development plan, which focused on tackling the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment that plagued developing countries. The strategy for implementing the national plan involved moving from short-term, symptom-based policies to a long-term approach based on sound evidence and logic. The overall objective was to provide a decent standard of living for all citizens. Actions undertaken covered a wide range of areas, including education, health, safety and security, employment, skills development, infrastructure and rural development, and were designed to ensure seamless implementation of the national development plan, the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063. His country also had a progressive, pro-poor tax system which, in combination with the enormous expansion of the national social support scheme since 2000, had already lifted millions of people out of poverty. Collective and measurable actions from all sectors of society would be needed to transform the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable in a sustainable manner, as highlighted by Governments and international stakeholders from the business sector and civil society at the twenty-seventh session of the World Forum on Africa in May 2017.

49. His delegation was concerned that rapidly increasingly levels of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment and the ongoing struggle for access to basic services and scarce resources continued to hinder global development, even as the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty was coming to a close. His delegation therefore called on the international community to remain resolute in its commitment to improving the lives of the poor and marginalized, including through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. His Government was committed to eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, a goal that should be the primary focus of the United Nations development system.

50. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that an integrated approach was needed to address multidimensional poverty and achieve sustainable development. The development in recent years of tools and political commitments to promote integration was a positive step in that direction, but there was still a need for more effective action and structural change. The submission of 44 voluntary national reviews in advance of the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2017 was a reassuring sign of the commitment of Member States to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the exchange of experiences and challenges would be a valuable tool for promoting sustainable development. It was important for all States, including developed countries, to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

51. He urged Member States to ensure that the set of Sustainable Development Goal indicators adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2017 was adopted by the Council and the General Assembly before the upcoming meeting of the high-level political forum, so that Member States and the United Nations system could begin to gather data to evaluate their progress.

52. The structure of the United Nations must adequately reflect the content of the 2030 Agenda. Decisions and actions of the system should be informed by the evaluation of past policies and programmes and involve all relevant stakeholders. The system should also be open to innovative ideas and technologies. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes should contribute to the establishment of an enabling international environment that promoted poverty eradication and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. There was also a need to establish more multi-stakeholder partnerships, while taking into account the differing roles and responsibilities of public and private actors. His delegation called for a significant mobilization of resources to help developing countries implement poverty eradication policies and programmes. In that connection, developed countries should respect the commitments they had made with regard to official development assistance, and ensure that the follow-up to the forum on financing for development was effective. Brazil also supported the call for the

declaration of a third United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty beginning in 2018.

53. **Mr. Gayito** (Observer for Ethiopia) said that it was unacceptable that 800 million people were living in poverty in a world with abundant resources. Eradicating poverty would require the establishment of a collaborative partnership involving all Member States and stakeholders to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development should also be revitalized, with a view to translating commitments into actions in support of national endeavours. While bringing about the necessary changes the global environment, which was currently characterized by slow economic growth, conflict, humanitarian crises and climate change, might seem like a daunting task, the achievements of the past 25 years should inspire the international community to redouble its efforts to tackle poverty.

54. In keeping with its view of poverty as an existential threat, his Government's policies had since 1991 been grounded in the overall objective of reducing poverty and achieving rapid, sustained and inclusive development. As a result of the integration of agricultural, industrial and environmental policies, in particular in the past 15 years, the poverty rate in his country had halved, per capita income and human development had significantly improved, foreign direct investment was growing and the economy was experiencing structural transformation. Ethiopia's economy was one of the fastest growing in the world, with an average annual growth rate of 10.9 per cent. That growth was the result of its long-term national vision of establishing a climate-resilient middle-income economy by 2025. One of the drivers of its structural transformation was its industrialization strategy, which promoted increased agricultural production alongside sustainable industrialization. His Government was also investing heavily in social and physical infrastructure, diversifying the economy, enhancing productive capacity and competitiveness, creating an enabling business environment, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, and participating in public-private partnerships that were in the public interest. Social safety nets had been established to protect vulnerable groups. His Government was also engaging in North-South and South-South cooperation in a manner that furthered the national development priorities.

55. That progress notwithstanding, his country continued to face a number of development challenges, including poverty, the adverse effects of climate change, a lack of good governance, weak institutional capacity and insufficient funding for development. However, his Government was committed to redoubling its efforts to reduce poverty, create jobs, in particular for youth and women, ensure food security and accelerate inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Eradicating multidimensional poverty around the world would require a combination of concerted national and global actions.

56. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Observer for Mexico) said that that the number of people living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean had increased from 168 million in 2014 to 175 million in 2015. Eradicating poverty and inequality would require integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in national development plans, with a view to transforming economies to promote inclusive development and job creation. Efforts to combat poverty and inequality and promote access to justice, social rights and people-centred public policies continued to be priorities for her Government, which had recently established a National Council on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to ensure that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals would become a long-term commitment of all levels of the Government and Mexican society.

57. Her Government had been working to align its social policies with best practices and the commitments undertaken under the Millennium Development Goals and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals, in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. That had involved the implementation of a rigorous methodology for measuring multidimensional poverty, which her delegation hoped would be adopted by all United Nations agencies and programmes to enable more accurate comparison and analysis.

58. Public policies to tackle poverty and inequality should pay particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous populations, migrants, persons with disabilities, youth, children and older persons. It was also important to take into account the structural gaps impeding development in middle-income countries, which were home to 73 per cent of the world's poor. Her country was committed to ending poverty and leaving no one behind.

59. **Mr. Pinheiro** (International Labour Organization) said that in 2016, 3 in 10 working men and women in developing and emerging countries were unable to lift themselves and their families above the moderate poverty line of $3.10 per day. Six in 10 workers in sub-Saharan Africa and almost 5 in 10 in Southern and South-East Asia were expected to still be experiencing that level of poverty in 2018. The number of workers living below the extreme poverty line of $1.90 per day

was set to fall over the next two years in both of those regions, but would still include nearly a third of workers in Africa and 15 per cent of workers in Southern Asia in 2018.

60. Decent work was the most sustainable route out of poverty. Poverty eradication therefore required increasing opportunities for decent work, increasing income from work and building and strengthening social protection systems, which should include mechanisms to support children and the elderly. Since poverty was largely concentrated in rural areas, harnessing the potential of rural work, including by moving from informal to formal economies, was key to sustainable development and leaving no one behind. Discrimination and marginalization in societies was reflected in labour markets. In order for decent work to become the norm, countries needed not only to create good quality jobs but also to focus on specific actions targeting populations that faced disadvantages on the labour market, or were excluded from it altogether.

61. Social protection floors were fundamental to preventing and reducing poverty across the life cycle and ensuring that no one was left behind. They should include benefits for children, mothers with newborns, persons with disabilities and the unemployed. Well-designed social protection systems facilitated the transition from conflict to peace, promoted domestic consumption, built human capital and increased productivity. They therefore had a key role to play in reducing poverty and vulnerability, addressing inequality and enhancing inclusive economic growth in many developing countries.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.